United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council considers ways of reinforcing UNPROFOR to enable it to deter attacks on six Bosnian towns designated as safe areas; Secretary-General, in report to Council, proposes additional deployment of 7,600 troops as "light option".

+ World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna hears appeal from President of Albania for help in preventing spread of Bosnian war; Conference asks Security Council to take all necessary measures to put end to genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Special Committee against Apartheid observes International Day of Solidarity with Struggling People of South Africa; Secretary-General says prospects for non-racial democracy in country are most encouraging.

+ Cuba says sanctions against Haiti would be illegal under United Nations Charter and would set dangerous precedent.

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The Council held consultations today on ways to reinforce the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to enable it to deter attacks on six Bosnian towns designated as safe areas, and to protect humanitarian deliveries.

In his report to the Council, dated 14 June, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, proposed, as a "light option", an initial deployment of 7,600 troops to reinforce UNPROFOR. That would start up the implementation of resolution 836 (1993), which authorized UNPROFOR to use force in self-defence in reply to bombardements of the safe areas, and could form the core if further troops reinforcements became necessary. The Force Commander of UNRPOFOR had estimated additional troop requirements of approximately 34,000 to obtain deterrence through strength, the report said.

Several potential troop-contributing countries, however, had indicated difficulties in providing equipment to the reinforced UNPROFOR. Without all

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the logistical support necessary for an efficient mechanized and armoured battalion, the tasks "simply cannot be performed", the report said. The Secretary-General had therefore appealed to Member States to make available as soon as possible air transportation for deployment of troops and equipment free of cost. Any forces deployed to enforce the safe areas must possess appropriate levels of protection, mobility and fire-power, and credible air-strike capability must be provided by Member States, he pointed out. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had already been contacted to prepare a plan for necessary air support.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, demanding an urgent meeting of the Council, said in a letter to the Council that it had not "witnessed any actions that would justify the designation of Goradze as a safe area". Despite two resolutions by the Council, declaring that city safe and allowing UNPROFOR to use force to deter attacks against it, the Serbian aggression was continuing "with unabated intensity".

The letter was transmitted to the Council by the Bosnian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey.

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The President of Albania appealed this morning to the United Nations, the European Community, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to take measures to prevent the spillover of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina into Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Addressimg the World Conference on Human Rights, President Sali Berisha stressed that unless preventive measures were taken by the interational community, the Albanian nation was resolved to resist any such spillover, which would entail a Balkan war.

Yesterday, the Conference asked the Security Council to take all necessary measures to put an end to genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The decision was adopted by acclamation after an appeal by Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Siladjic, who said the Conference would have no credibility if it did not respond to the Republic's suffering. For 15 months there had been almost no action on the part of the international community to protect human rights there, he said.

United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher told the Conference that cultural relativism must not become the last refuge of repression. There was no contradiction between the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the different cultures in the international community, he said. The real chasm was between the cynical excuses of oppressive regimes and the sincere aspirations of their people.

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Mr. Christopher submitted a plan of action to pursue human rights regardless of the Conference's outcome, saying the United States sought to build the United Nations capacity for preventive diplomacy, safeguarding human rights and promoting democracy.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said the approach to human rights issues should be based on the United Nations Charter, not on the preferences of any country or group. Economic and development cooperation should not be linked to human rights implementation, he stressed.

Former President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, who is a special guest of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, pointed out that some countries felt that the Universal Declaration on Human rights did not apply to them. "The same countries that are opposing any progress on human rights, do not permit their own citizens to participate in electing and shaping their own Government, he noted.

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The Special Committee against Apartheid today observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa, also known as Soweto Day. The observance marked the seventeenth anniversary of a student uprising in Soweto and other South African townships in 1976, when police fired on demonstrators demanding better education for black people, killing hundreds of schoolchildren.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a message to the Special Committee, said that the Day of Solidarity was being observed at a time when the prospects for the establishment of a non-racial democracy in South Africa were most encouraging. He said a multiracial transitional executive council was expected to be set up within weeks, and urged all parties to make every effort to reach agreement on outstanding issues.

A democratic, non-racial and united South Africa was one of the international community's highest priorities, and the United Nations would continue to work towards that goal, according to the Secretary-General. He stressed that a peaceful political climate was essential for democracy, and for progress in tackling the country's socio-economic problems.

General Assembly President Stoyan Ganev (Bulgaria) said next year's elections would mark South Africa's "clean break" with apartheid. The international community must support the ongoing process, in line with the 1989 Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa.

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Cuba has said that the Security Council should not impose sanctions against Haiti as the situation there is an internal matter and does not relate to international peace and security. Such sanctions would be illegal under the United Nations Charter and would set a dangerous precedent by attempting

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to extend the Council's mandate, Cuba's Permanent Representative to the United Nations said in a letter to the Council. The letter referred to a proposal before the Council to impose an oil and arms embargo against the de facto government in Haiti.

Cuba stressed that it wanted constitutional order restored in Haiti and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned to power. It said, however, that a constant foreign presence in the country had led to the establishment of military governments which had destroyed the aspirations of the Haitian people.

Cuba asked why sanctions imposed by regional organizations had not been effective, yet some countries had been able to prevent many Haitians from escaping from the military regime. Various texts circulating unofficially in the Council referred to the impact of Haitian refugees on international peace and security in the region, the letter said. However, Cuba had received thousands of Haitian refugees and did not consider them a threat to peace and security. The issue was purely humanitarian and should be resolved through international organizations dealing with refugees, it said.

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